



MARTIN O'MALLEY
GOVERNOR

STATE HOUSE
100 STATE Circle
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925
(410) 974-3901
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Media Contacts: Nina Smith

Office: [410-974-2316](tel:410-974-2316)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cell: [410-533-0363](tel:410-533-0363)

GOVERNOR O'MALLEY MEETS WITH EL SALVADOR PRESIDENT MAURICIO FUNES

**Governor addresses Salvadoran and American companies at American Chamber
of Commerce breakfast**

ANNAPOLIS, MD (December 9, 2013) – As part of a nine-day trade mission to Brazil and El Salvador, Governor Martin O'Malley today met with El Salvador's President Mauricio Funes to discuss the cultural and economic development ties between Maryland and El Salvador. With more than 120,000 residents of Salvadoran descent, Maryland has one of the largest Salvadoran populations in the U.S. In addition, the State is home to more than 38,000 Latino-owned businesses, a large percentage of which are owned by Salvadorans, including Rio Grande Foods in Laurel. Prior to meeting with President Funes, Governor O'Malley met with El Salvador's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Juan Jose Garia, whose office oversees Salvadorans' activities abroad.

"Maryland has the highest earning Salvadoran population in the Country, and businesses like Rio Grande provide family-supporting jobs for working moms and dads across our state," said Governor O'Malley. "We're pleased to start conversations and build business relationships here in El Salvador that will hopefully lead to expanded access and increased opportunity for more Maryland families."

Earlier today, Governor O'Malley addressed an American Chamber of Commerce of El Salvador breakfast. He spoke to dozens of Salvadoran

companies that do business, or want to do business in the U.S, and American companies that do business in El Salvador. While there, the Governor was also joined by Maryland Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez and Josue Alvarado, president of Rio Grande Foods, a multi-million dollar importer of Salvadoran foods based in Maryland. As part of his remarks, the Governor highlighted the State's strategic location and proximity to the nation's capital, diverse ethnic communities and wealth of international companies, as well as the State's interest in increasing trade and investment by El Salvadoran companies. In 2012, total trade between El Salvador and Maryland reached \$60 million and included items like apparel, food and computer and electronic products.

The Governor joined El Salvador's Minister of Justice and Public Security and a number of mayors representing El Salvador cities for lunch to discuss public safety and security issues in the country. The Governor shared his experiences and the State's efforts to promote safer communities, stabilize families in need and strengthen academic performance for children.

Later, Governor O'Malley met with San Salvador Mayor Gloria Calderon de Onate, who presented the Governor with a guitar, statue and diploma in gratitude for the Governor's contributions to Salvadorans residing in Maryland. In September, the Governor received an award at the 192nd Anniversary of El Salvador's Independence Day celebration in September. The award was presented by El Salvador's Ambassador to the U.S. Ruben Zamora and recognized the Governor's support of the State's Salvadoran community.

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